

Washburn-Crosby Milling Complex,
Wheat House
708 South Second Street
Minneapolis
Hennepin County
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-69-I

HABS
MINN,
27-MINAP,
20-IL-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
WASHBURN-CROSBY MILLING COMPLEX
WHEAT HOUSE

HABS No. MN-~~69~~^{69-I}

Location: 708 South Second Street, Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota

USGS Minneapolis South Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: Zone 15; 479740:4980480; 479860:4980420; 479820:4980360; 479700:4980400

Present Owner: Riverside Industries, Inc.
P.O. Box 1125
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440

Present Occupant: Vacant

Significance: An integral part of the Washburn-Crosby Milling Complex, the Wheat House, built by William de la Barre, was originally designed "to clean all the wheat ground in the "A" Mill". The Wheat House was capable of holding 100,000 bushels in its wooden storage tanks. Standing five stories high with two basement levels, the building displayed a limestone facade to match the adjoining "A" Mill. In 1917, a sixth story was added. Damaged by fire in 1928, the Wheat House was rebuilt of reinforced concrete, with an enlarged capacity of 200,000 bushels.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION See HABS No. MN-69 for general information.

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1881
2. Architect: William de la Barre
3. Original and subsequent owner: The Wheat House was originally built for, and owned by, the Washburn-Crosby Company of Minneapolis. It was purchased in 1965 by Riverside Industries, Inc.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: Plans from 1898 and 1929 have been located.

6. Alterations and additions:

Permit #A13310 Brick and reinforced concrete mill built on
6/21/1916 the north side of the original "A" wheat
house (compare 1912 and 1927 Sanborn maps)
Architect and Builder: John Wunder Co.

Permit #A13701 Structural steel conveyor gallery with
5/11/1917 galvanized iron covering.
Architect and Builder: John Wunder Co.

Permit #A13782 Brick and reinforced concrete 6th story
7/12/1917 addition to "A" wheathouse.
Architect and Builder: John Wunder Co.

Permit #A14546 Reinforced concrete grain tanks (9) added
7/18/1919 to cleaning house to replace the old frame
bins.
Architect and Builder: Barnett Record Co.

Permit #A14661 Reinforced concrete grain dryer to replace
9/30/1919 non-fireproof dryers.
Architect and Builder: Barnett Record Co.

Permit #A19094 Steel grain conveyor gallery added.
10/1/1928
Architect: Unknown.
Builder: Day Labor.

Permit #A30793 8' x 46' open concrete platform located near
4/6/1953 the rear of the building.
Architect: Unknown.
Builder: August Aderstrand Co.

B. Historical Context:

Built upon the burned ruins of the Diamond Mill which was destroyed by the great mill explosion, the Wheat House was constructed in 1881 by William de la Barre. Originally designed "to clean all the wheat found in the "A" Mill," the Wheat House was capable of holding 100,000 bushels in its wooden storage tanks. Measuring 35' x 90', standing five stories high with two basement levels, the building displayed a limestone facade to match the adjoining "A" Mill. In 1917, a sixth story was added. Damaged by fire in 1928, the Wheat House was rebuilt of reinforced concrete, with an enlarged capacity of 200,000 bushels. The building's rather stark appearance is in high contrast to its more decorative neighbor, the old Humboldt Mill, but historically it's a good example of form following function in the milling process.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Built in 1881, the Wheat House is very simple in its overall character. Many of the original decorative elements, such as an oculus window centered under a simple, bracketed cornice following the shallow pitch of the gable roof, have been removed. The entire facade has been stuccoed and three modern industrial sash windows have been added to the top floor.
2. Condition of fabric: Overall, the exterior is in fairly good condition. The original construction, along with additions remain sound. Much of the original decorative elements have been removed.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 35' x 90', originally five stories high with two basement levels. A sixth story was added in 1917. Facade is marked by three windows.
2. Foundations: Limestone footings support the brick and reinforced concrete structure.
3. Walls: Brick and reinforced concrete.
4. Structural system, framing: Exterior walls and major partition walls of the original portion were brick, load-bearing.
5. Porches: 8' x 46' open concrete loading platform located in the rear of the building.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Original door on South Second Street was removed after 1928 fire.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Three window openings on Second Street facade.
7. Roof: Original pitched roof was lost in the 1928 fire. No noticeable cornice features, dormers or towers projections.

WASHBURN-CROSBY MILLING COMPLEX,
WHEAT HOUSE
HABS No. MN-69-I (Page 4)

C. Description of Interior:

There were five main floors with two basement levels of concrete slab construction. It housed the necessary cleaning and storage equipment for its function as a wheat house. Most of this original equipment has been removed.

1. Stairways: Interior stairwell located near the southwest corner. A man lift is located adjacent to the stairs.
2. Flooring: Concrete slab.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: Brick
4. Doors: 3'-6" x 7'-6"
5. Lighting: Fixtures removed

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Main elevation faces South Second Street and is oriented facing southwest.
2. Outbuildings: Located as part of an entire milling complex. No outbuildings connected directly with the Wheat House.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: 1898 and 1929 plans are available as a part of the drawings of the Washburn "A" Mill on file at the General Mills archives.
- B. Early Views: (From the Minnesota Historical Society) View from the South, 1893.
- C. Bibliography:
 1. Primary and unpublished sources:
Department of Inspections, City of Minneapolis.
 2. Secondary and published sources:
The Northwestern Miller, 9:259.
The Minneapolis Journal, October 11, 1928.

WASHBURN-CROSBY MILLING COMPLEX,
WHEAT HOUSE
HABS No. MN-69-I (Page 5)

Saint Anthony Falls Rediscovered, James Berman, ed.
Minneapolis, 1980.

Prepared by:
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University of Minnesota
March 1986

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was prepared as a class project for Architecture 5142, Historic Building Research and Documentation, a class offered in the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The class project was prepared under the direction of Professor Foster W. Dunwiddie in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Historical data was compiled by Brian J. Forss, University of Minnesota, March 1986.